

Howdy, Folks:

As part of EPA's cleanup of OU4 (a place a lot of us call "Libby, Montana"), the trucks that haul asbestos-containing materials from town are decontaminated at the "Amphitheater" up Rainy Creek before they return to Libby for another load. The water used for decontaminating the trucks is drawn from "Mill Pond," near the Amphitheater. Mill Pond is fed by seepage from an upstream tailings dam (very clean water) and by surface water runoff from waste dumps and the former mine/mill site (very, very unclean water, asbestos-wise). For this reason, it is necessary to remove the asbestos fibers from the Mill Pond water by filtration before it can be used for decontamination. On the face of it, Mill Pond seems a pretty dumb place to get water for decontamination, but hey, it's your parade.

By now, you must be aware that ER has actually not filtered the Mill Pond water, and has not done so since at least the 2003 season. Maybe the filters cost a lot, are a hassle to change, and they get clogged fast (sort of like the filters on the respirators that many dead or dying former WR Grace workers *didn't* wear?) This means that more than 15,000 truck trips (and that doesn't include those involved in cleaning up the Parker property) were not decontaminated before they returned to Libby. Ever notice the white residue on a vehicle after it's been "decontaminated" at the Amphitheater and the water dries on the trip back to town? Look at the chemistry of Mill Pond water and you will realize that the white residue *cannot* be "just hard water deposits." Consider the possibility that, for every fiber of asbestos you take out of Libby, ER scatters two fibers of Mill Pond asbestos to the winds when they drive a "decontaminated" truck back to town.

Did EPA and/or CDM *know* the water wasn't being filtered by ER? Has ER charged the government for expensive filters they didn't actually purchase and use? Has EPA been so busy chasing down and digging up vermiculite granules a foot or more beneath folks' yards that they just didn't have time to verify that everything was on the up-and-up with their contractors? How much asbestos do you suppose has been released to the environment through ER's sham decontamination over the past *five* construction seasons? These are important questions; please consider this is your opportunity to help in getting answers.

If you're wondering why I'm sending this anonymously, it's because low-bid remediation contractors sometimes are thuggish louts, and I don't know to what lengths ER will go to silence or punish a whistleblower. They've got a lot at stake, after all. If you have the courage to look closely into the questionable goings-on at OU4, you'll see that the phony decontamination operation is just the tip of the iceberg. (I'm being cryptic about all this only because I'd nm the risk of identifying myself if I gave you more details. Lots of folks know about the phony filtering issue, so that alone can't really give me away.)

If you can't summon the courage to get answers, I intend to help you, but it probably won't be as comfortable for any of us, and you'll certainly have fewer opportunities to "spin." For example, one consequence of your lack of courage could be that several interested, informed, influential and widely-read parties will learn of this and other questionable dealings at OU4. To prevent such an uncontrolled investigation and the exposure of what a lot of people might see as incompetence and/or negligence on the part of our beloved and trusted EPA, and incompetence, negligence, even corruption and/or fraud on the part of EPA's contractors, you need only post the question, "Does EPA's contractor filter the water from Mill Pond that they've used since 2003 to decontaminate the trucks before they return to town?" on the faux Q&A section of the website, <http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/libby/updates.html>. If the question is there (along with some kind of answer, of course) before the close of business on November 30, I'll take it as a sign that you have wisely chosen to do the right thing, are investigating the sketchy matters at OU4, and not simply sweeping the issue under the rug. That will be a good start. If the question is not posted, I'll assume you have chosen to *not* do the right thing, and will vigorously proceed to assist you in doing so.

Sincerely,

A True Friend of Libby

cc: P. Peronard  
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